

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 SSM-03 SAM-01 ACDA-07

OMB-01 /088 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1797

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 101

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

CIA WASHDC

COMSIXTHFLT

COMPHIBRON SIX

COM THREE FOUR MAU

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7491

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 16

REF: BEIRUT 7474

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1. SUMMARY: FRANGIE NAMES CHAMOUN ACTING PM IN CABINET

RESHUFFLE. LEBANESE LEADERS, INCLUDING GEMAYEL, KARAME, SALAM AND IMAM SADR, CONTINUE CAIRO CONTACTS. SARKIS EXPECTED TO GO TO CAIRO SEP 18 AND MAY REPRESENT LEBANON AT SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE MEETING EN ROUTE. GRAND MUFTI AND KARIM PAKRADOUNI CONFER IN DAMASCUS. JUNBLATT ISSUES LONG STATEMENT ASKING SARKIS TO MAKE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND NOT KOWTOW TO "TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS." JUNIOR LAA OFFICERS REPORTEDLY SEEKING SEP 23 DISSOLUTION OF LAA. GROUND SITUATION GENERALLY CALM. END SUMMARY.

2. FRANGIE SHUFFLES CABINET. PRESIDENT FRANGIE NAMES CHAMOUN ACTING PM IN ABSENCE OF KARAME IN CAIRO. KARAME REMAINS PRIME MINISTER BUT IS STRIPPED OF DEFENSE, FINANCE AND INFORMATION PORTFOLIOS AND GIVEN SEVERAL MINOR MINISTRIES. GEORGE SKAFF BECOMES MINISTER OF FINANCE. "SUPERMINISTER" CHAMOUN NOW HOLDS PORTFOLIOS OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PHALANGE EXPRESSES SURPRISE AND OPPOSITION TO THIS SURPRISE MOVE, JUST EIGHT DAYS BEFORE FRANGIE IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE OFFICE, AND LEBANESE LEFT IS NATURALLY OUTRAGED.

3. CAIRO VISITS. LEBANESE IN CAIRO INCLUDE GEMAYEL, KARAME, SALAM AND IMAM MUSA SADR. JUNBLATT SAID PLANNING ARRIVE AFTER OTHERS LEAVE, PERHAPS, AN NAHAR SAYS, ACCOMPANIED BY YASIR ARAFAT. EDDE SAYS KFOUR FRONT PRESENCE IN CAIRO IS "ACT OF CONTRITION" BUT AT SAME TIME RADIO AMCHITE (FRANGIE) CONTINUES TO ATTACK SADAT AND REJECT EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN AL FORCE. EDDE EXPRESSES HOPE LEBANESE IN CAIRO WILL ASK SADAT TO REPLACE SYRIAN AL TROOPS WITH EGYPTIANS

4. SARKIS. PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS EXPECTED TO TRAVEL TO CAIRO SEP 18. AN NAHAR SAYS BEFORE GOING TO EGYPT SARKIS MAY ATTEND SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE MEETING AS SOLE LEBANESE REPRESENTATIVE AND THEN MEET ASSAD IN DAMASCUS. SARKIS MET SEP 15 WITH HASAN SABRI KHOLI WHO LATER TOLD THE PRESS THAT "A GLOBAL CHANGE IN LEBANESE SITUATION IN COMING IN NEXT FEW DAYS." VICE-PRESIDENT OF CHAMBER MOUNIR ABU-FADAL, PRESENT FOR PART OF SARKIS/KHOLI MEETING, SAYS PLACES UNDER CONSIDERATION

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FOR INAUGURATION INCLUDE BAABDA, BCHEMOUN, BAALBEK, CHTAURA, RAYACK, THE PALACE OF JUSTICE AND VILLA MANSOUR. AL REP KHOLI SCHEDULED TO SEE CHAMOUN/FRANGIE SEP 16. THEIR ATTITUDE MAY DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT SARKIS ATTENDS SYRIAN/PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE MEETING.

5. DAMASCUS VISITS. GRAND MUFTI MET SEP 15 IN DAMASCUS WITH FM KHADDAM AS MUFTI CONTINUE SHUTTLE

BETWEEN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS. KATAEB REPRESENTATIVE KARIM
PAKRADOUNI ALSO IN DAMASCUS SEP 15.

6. JUNBLATT. AL MOHARRIR CARRIES LENGTHY JUNBLATT
SPEECH IN WHICH HE ATTRIBUTES IMPROVEMENTS IN LEBANESE
SITUATION TO STEADFASTNESS OF NM AND PALESTINIANS IN
FORCING US, ISRAEL AND OTHER STATES TO CHANGE THEIR
PLANNING. JUNBLATT CALLS ON SARKIS TO MAKE COMPREHENSIVE
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, AND TO RISE ABOVE COMPROMISES
AND "PLEASING TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS."

7. MORE ON THE LAA. WE UNDERSTAND JUNIOR LAA OFFICERS
AND SOME NCO'S ARE PUSHING FOR DISSOLUTION OF LAA ON
SEP 23 IN ORDER REINTEGRATE THEMSELVES INTO LEBANESE
ARMY AS OF THAT DATE. FORMER COMMANDER OF LEBANESE
ARMY ARMOR ARM, COL. MUKHTAR MAZBUDI, SURMIZES THAT
VANGUARDS WILL TAKE SAME ACTION SEP 23 BECAUSE "TO
MAINTAIN SEPARATE MILITARY IDENTITY UNDER NEW PRESIDENT
WOULD BE TO OPPOSE HIM." BUAL MOHARRIR SAYS DISPUTE
BETWEEN LAA AND "NATIONAL GUARDS" CONCERNING AUTHORITY
OVER CARGO OF SHIP CARRYING AID TO LEBANON FROM ARAB
STATES AVERTED IN TYRE SEP 15. COMMANDER OF NATIONAL
GUARDS QUOTED AS SAYING LAA INTERESTED "ONLY IN
COLLECTING TAXES FOR ITS SOLDIERS AND SUPPORTERS AND
DOES NOT TAKE ANY INTEREST IN THE CONSUMERS."

8. GROUND SITUATION. SITUATION REMAINS GENERALLY CALM
DESPITE SMALL-SCALE CLASHES AND SPORADIC SHELLING.
GROUND ACTION REPORTED FROM SINNINE/BISKINTA IN METN,
IN AREA AROUND TRIPOLI, IN BEIRUT AND AT KAHALE/ALEY,
SALIMA/BAABDATE AND AIN EL-RUMMANEH. LARGEST CLASH
WAS SMALL BATTLE NEAR GALLERY SAMAAH IN BEIRUT SUBURBS.
HEAVY BUT SPORADIC SHELLING IN COMMERCIAL AREA, BUT
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TRAFFIC CONTINUES CROSS GREEN LINE. L'ORIENT LE JOUR
SAYS SOME 300 SYRIANS HAVE RETREATED FROM WESTERN
BEKAA VILLAGE OF LABBAYA WHERE THEY BATTLED PALESTINIAN/
LEFTIST FORCES SEP 14. VOICE OF LEBANON CLAIMS
PALESTINIANS AND COMMUNISTS HAVE ATTACKED VILLAGES IN
SOUTH LEBANON, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT07491
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760349-0870
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760955/aaaabuvcltel
Line Count: 161
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 7474
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 16
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006